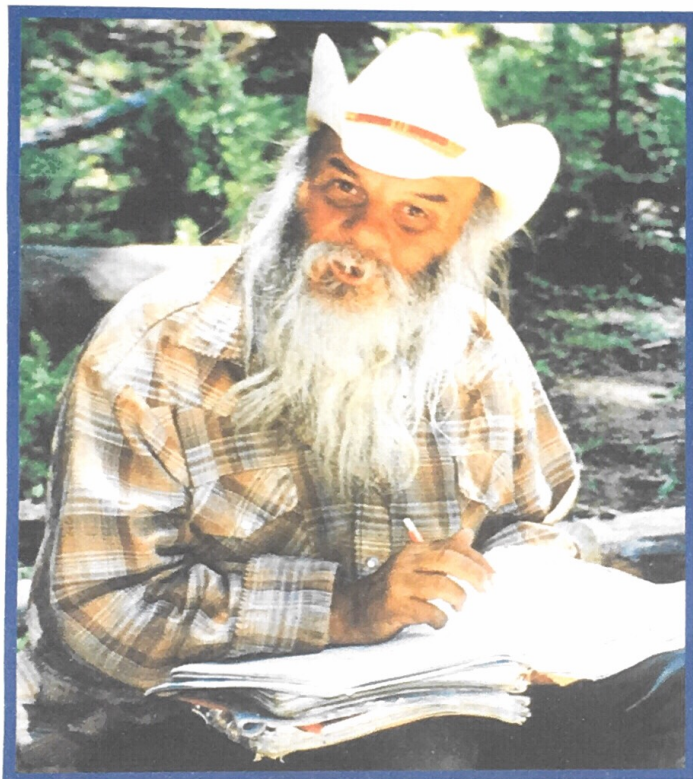




Rainbow Family

Life Stories



*by Jodey Bateman.
Interviews with Rainbow
Family of Living Light
folks conducted between
1977 and 2008.*

Scanned in 2018.

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05.E JAYSUN - "I'm Still a Warrior"

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lined it with silk from a wedding dress that belonged to a neighbor couple - straight old cowboy people. The doctor examined the child and diagnosed it as crib death. He said what he could to allay our feeling of guilt. Then he and I went around and walked in the sun on a beautiful day. He asked me, "Jayson, do you believe in superstition?"

I said, "If it creates fear, I don't. If it means being open-minded, I do." He told me a story. The area we lived in is very old Spanish - old culture, old religion, old suspicions and beliefs - no inroads into their culture. He was ministering to an old, old Spanish woman in the area who was dying slowly. She'd never been married and she'd never had any children. She didn't speak any English. My doctor friend had an interpreter who was a local young fellow. The day before we called the doctor about our son dying, he had visited the old lady and saw that she was not long to live. When he left, the interpreter told Bill, the doctor, about a belief in the area that when an old unchilded woman dies, her spirit will go forth to take a young male child with her. My doctor friend dismissed this as old folklore that wasn't real. But the next morning, he got a phone call that the old lady had died and then another call that our super-healthy son had died. And I told him about the spirit I saw. We stood silently a long time.

So crib death is a matter of the spirit.

We buried Shawn in our secret place, our holy spot where we put our dope garden, about a mile and a half from the house. We buried Shawn there with many things of magic and the spirit. The next day we dropped acid - good, strong acid as it was meant to be acid. We walked to a dome of rock and then walked to the Indian burial mound on top where we had been married. The sage around there is taller, more aromatic, greener, more vibrant than any sage in the area. We were sitting there where there's grass and this bird came flying at my face and passed just by my ear and I said, "Birds return in the spring from the south, land of fertility," and I looked at the west and at the north, the land of purity and the east where it would originate. We took heart. It was Shawn and the Spirit of the Lord.

Only two moons after our son was given away, we conceived again. So our

bird did return in the spring and that's our son Shawn that we have now. Barry and Sunny came that winter. They were froze out of Montana. They were both working at a home for mentally m/s under stood children and they couldn't support themselves - changing 18 year old kids' diapers and playing games with m/s under stood gifted six year olds. Barry and I went cowboying - the chapatti cowboys. We'd go off for six days at a time and leave the ladies behind and all we had to eat were chapatties - Hindu tortillas - and beans.

That summer Feather, Grasshopper and I didn't go to the Utah Gathering. We went to Baltimore while we were pregnant. I got to meet my in-laws. They were good people and they got me a job building a wharf. I worked there for three or four months. Feather was pregnant working in a maternity shop. I saw a lot of what I didn't want to be part of. We had to earn our way out of Baltimore. It took a lot of points to get out of there. We came back to New Mexico before we gave birth to our second Shawn. We did a natural child birth in the county hospital.

We left Lindrith because it wasn't fulfilling. We were hiding out - escaping. We had a cache of food and a good dependable weapon to defend our home fortress. We were so survival oriented. We had it all together, though. We were stagnating and not helping anyone, hanging out in the mountains waiting for it all to fall apart. We realized that it was a selfish trip.

We moved to the Jemez Mountains of New Mexico and I began working on a geothermal exploration drilling rig, which I saw as a clean energy thing. It was really fascinating and hard dangerous work. We tapped into some hellacious temperatures - 400 to 500 degrees of superheated steam, like 400 pounds per square inch geothermal pressure. That was like drilling to 10,000 feet. I did that for ten straight months, never was late, never missed a day. I made good money. We got trucks and tires and a wood stove out of it. We were working on our material trip. I aged a lot at that job physically. My split got gray. You can think that geothermal may be an alternative to nuclear energy and that may very well be, but when you're on the rig, the mud and the noise and the neon lights at three and four in the

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morning and the 14th cup of coffee make it all pretty grim. It was just foreign to my spirit.

In April, 1975, we went to the Pecos National Forest and went thinning trees there until the Arkansas Gathering. We felt that thinning was a righteous endeavor, you dig? The thing was to be out where we wanted to be in the woods. We felt we were doing valuable healing work to the forest by

thinning. We finished the contract just in time to go to the Arkansas Gathering.

Arkansas was really far out, because we learned how much strength can come from adversity, and that's a really powerful lesson. It seems like Arkansas for me personally was the first time I found myself talking with the reporters and the sheriff and being knowledgeable about the parking lot, etc. Freedom and I met there and it was the most brotherly mutual meeting I had had in many moons.

The county people gave us until like July 6 to close the gathering down and gave us until the 7th to clean up. The night of the 7th boiled down to the cleanup crew on the beach by the Buffalo River. There was about 20 of us in the most magical circle that night. We looked up and there was a circle of stars directly overhead and we smoked hashish out of an old potato. That was the core of what became like a 60 person caravan to Stillwater, Oklahoma. Like there was a tornado in Stillwater and we went there to help the townspeople clean up. We did a lot of that, but there was a lot cleaned up already.

Oklahoma State University allowed us to stay on their property out at Lake Carl Blackwell near Stillwater and we had our tipis and buses there in a beautiful camp. Many of us got jobs in the area and were immediately befriended by the local populace. Oro would come out to our camp at Lake Carl Blackwell with an OSU professor she was hitting it off with. They'd drink wine with us and tell stories. Oro's a powerful woman - robust. There's one magic person in every 50 square miles and she was it for Stillwater.

Feather and I got where we could feel fall setting in and felt to get back home. I'd still be up there in the Jemez country if it hadn't changed. It got real popular, which is when we discovered the Gila area of

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New Mexico. It was kind of like Freedom and Feather and I and a sister named Barbara headed there and bid a thinning contract in the national forest. So we lived once again at 9,000 feet in October in our tipi, which got cold. It was like Freedom and Feather and the others who helped, like the level of intensity we worked at was a challenge and stimulating - just dancing along with the saws. We had a lot of fun, we jived a lot. We finished that contract and Freedom left. It was time to go and we moved to Luna, New Mexico. We continued to bid thinning contracts and formed a thinning co-operative with other brothers and sisters in the area, living in the very high country, working hard, eating well and playing good music.

In January of '76, Feather and I left Grasshopper and Shawn with some neighbor friends and we hitch hiked to Montana to Barry's house. On that hitch hiking trip, I stopped smoking cigarettes, which amazed me - and Feather. I got feverish hitch hiking toward Helena, Montana. We stopped for the night and I sweated. I got in touch with the spirit of tobacco - the entity, you dig? Like peyote has Mescalito, tobacco has its spirit, which I had been abusing for many years. Smoke is a sacred thing when done in a sacred manner.

We arrived at Barry and Sunny's cabin in the hills outside of Kalispel, Montana. Their son Shaneka was a newborn. We went up there for this big meeting that involved 105 Federal, state, local and corporate agents - all against us, every single one of them. It was amazing. There was 12 of us there from the Family. At the meeting we had to deal with some pretty uptight impressions and we stated our case clearly. We could feel a few minds beginning to open to who we really are, yet it became obvious that no way were we gonna be able to do the gathering in the Belly River valley at Glacier Park. So after that meeting, it was miles and miles of exploration, searching for a site, finally settling on Choteau.

Then we went to Santa Fe to meet with the Christ Brotherhood people, who were beginning for the first time since 1973 in Wyoming to express interest in the Rainbow Gathering. Like Patterson, the chief honcho of the Christ

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Brotherhood, had been totally alienated at the Wyoming Gathering and was attempting at this time to change the gathering more to his liking so he could take part once again. We were received respectfully - Freedom, Garrick, Dominic and I and Red Dave. It was immediately apparent that the Christ Brotherhood were working on Garrick's head because he stood as the strongest Rainbower there at the time.

We were treated royally. We were guests at Patterson's million dollar ranch with the largest indoor stable in New Mexico. They had a heated swimming pool and they were building a recording studio. They had brought in all these beautiful things by their own energy - the beautiful service they did for the community of Santa Fe with the youth hostel. I got a feeling that at the ranch almost all of them were well-to-do people. They treated us with respect and courtesy. It was left to Patterson to really lay it on us.

For four days and nights we averaged between 2½ and 4½ hours of sleep a night. The highest point of the whole thing was that Garrick and his daughter Eden Star and I met for the first time. We sat up and had what I imagine a slumber party would be. We'd be completely exhausted, obliterated and we couldn't stop sharing ourselves. We were crazed.

In the daytime there were 20 of us sitting in a circle. Six of us were Rainbowers. Only three of us spoke up. The other 14 were Patterson's people and whatever he said was the law. There was an intense discussion about changing the Rainbow Family name. Patterson didn't want Rainbow in the gathering name nowhere. But we felt really strongly to stand by what we had been a part of, whatever karma we had accrued in that name. You just can't change a name and duck out. Patterson was talking over Garrick and me. He looked at me at one point, he was shouting at me. I said, "I demand at least the respect to say my part in peace." He looked at me and said, "Respect! You won't get respect from me until you earn it!"

I wasn't quite sure of my opinions in those days. I wasn't really sure what I had seen. But I felt what I felt. I went as an emissary of light, to help however I could with the gathering and we were absolutely affronted. I really pray that such people as Patterson with such great gifts of power

and knowledge, can learn the lessons of balance. I hope that all this serves as a lesson for them. I really pray that it is working right on. Feather got pregnant and I asked her to have an abortion. I got a lot of resentment from her. I'm open minded as possible, therefore I'm torn between the pragmatic zero population growth, that we've got to stabilize - not cease, just stabilize - and the other concept that we can just go ahead and it doesn't matter, the Lord will take care of it and we're not responsible for our karma. Coming from that, I believe in having children and raising them right. BUT I also believe in taking responsibility to not have more children than you can have in the highest possible way.

In mid-March we began thinning with our friends in Luna again. We didn't go to the Montana Gathering. We missed it so. We had the medicine tipi lodge, and we couldn't make it. We found ourselves once again hung up trying to get it together on a material level with the thinning contract. The real key to the energy was manifesting in Montana - the way to go about things where the true commitment lies. And we never made any bucks with the thinning contract.

That kind of primed our pump for our involvement in the New Mexico Gathering in 1977. I can't express what it is to be working in the focus of a gathering for a time. It's like being gifted by the Lord and yet not being anything special at all. The New Mexico Gathering really inspired Feather and I to great visions. And after going through it all, I find my biggest lesson is patience - and perseverance.

In Spring, 1977, the state sent two food stamp investigators to our area, supposedly to investigate the different tree thinning contractors. The plans for the New Mexico Gathering were already published and our pictures were in the paper and we were already obviously extremely involved with the gathering. These two investigators were the most corrupt troublemakers with badges I had ever met, and it was obvious they were political hatchet men for some group in state politics. They told me they had enough evidence to arrest me about

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improper use of food stamps during the prior year. And they said if we didn't tell them something that would incriminate Bob Atwood, the food stamp man, they were going to hang us.

In that county, voters are like 75% Democratic. Bob Atwood was the strongest figure in the Democratic machine there. Bob's really been good to a lot of people there. When we met him, he was a food stamp worker, but he had been in the Catron County courthouse for many years in one position or another. I knew we had done nothing wrong. I really hoped that Bob Atwood had done nothing wrong that would get us in trouble. Eventually, after they had spread all the bad rumors, untruths and poison around the county, these investigators split, never to be heard of again. These guys sowed a lot of doubt in people's minds.

Charges were never brought against Bob Atwood. They had no proof of any wrongdoing. We cleared ourselves of their charges. When they came to our house to question us, that day Feather and I had all our previous year's business papers out, doing our income tax. They already knew what our gross was. They had been into our personal records at the bank and our numbers agreed with theirs as far as the gross was concerned. Our gross was \$14,900 and after expenses and shares to our friends in the tree thinning co-op were paid out, our taxable income was \$1,900 for a family of four - poverty level.

They charged Bob Atwood was giving me food stamps so I would get the Rainbow Family to vote for him. Barry's been through such things, Garrick's been through such things and so many others have. So Bob counter-sued them. I let it be at that point. I said, "OK, fuck it. We're in the right. I ain't gonna worry. I'm gonna trust everything's gonna be cool. These guys don't matter. I believe in ultimate justice. I don't get worried about evil."

Shortly after that, we were evicted from our beautiful house in May 1977. We got evicted just about the time we got our garden soil doing well. We hauled in mulch. We got evicted because the owners found out we was Rainbow. They had a villa in Mexico and the campesinos in Mexico were revolting then.

The campesinos were poor people like us, and the owners' image of the Rainbow Family identified us with that and they thought we were going to bring 5,000 hippies to take over their land. Meanwhile we were putting on thousands of miles looking for a site for the gathering, going to Forest rangers' meetings, going to different festivals to spread the word about the gathering.

At the gathering we were in the OM circle and a storm was coming in. Most people had gone for cover. About 50 people were left in the circle.

Then a red-headed brother from Texas named John Henry stood up and said his wife and kids had been killed in a car wreck two years before and that he'd just found out from the rangers that his mother and father and sisters had died in a car wreck last night. He said "You're all the family I have in the world." We started OMing and hugging him. Just then, lightning struck a tree and set it on fire.

There was Barry and Road Dog and Garrick and all the others arguing around the tree about what to do. Here they were under this widow-maker with flaming branches dropping around them - everybody arguing and nobody looking up to see what was happening. I had to take charge. I hollered, "Hold it!" in my most commanding voice and got everybody to form a circle and told them what I thought should be done. Then I became just an ordinary worker among them. We dug a bed in the ground with non-organic matter in it, and we cut the tree down to where it fell in the bed. It was fun - just so zany and crazy.

At one point I looked up and saw this bird trying to get to this hole in the top of the tree and the flames kept her back. It became apparent to me that her brood was in there and she was trying to save them. Just as I had realized that, I looked around and saw John Henry, the brother who had lost his family. I said to him, "Do you see that?" and he just nodded. I didn't see him after that. He left the next day. He sure is a strong brother.

Our visions and our hopes for the gathering and the feeling of being part of that energy and power were so heightened at that

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focus, you dig? On one level I've taken a fall, a let-down. I wanted to see the dream of humanity come true. Pragmatically I wanted to see manifest from the gathering towards a place where those of us who felt likewise could exemplify what we'd been talking about all these years.

Feather and I helped to found the Rainbow Peace Camp at Velarde, New Mexico, after the gathering. It was a good experience. I got real inspired about uncapping a good well that was there - for a garden. It was feasible. We sounded it. It was only 60 feet down with steel casing all the way. We looked at the ground flow. It was good. But the Bureau of Land Management would not let us uncap it. At that point, I saw one more landlord trip, so now it's patiently we press our way through the bureaucracy of land holders.

We did a few things around the state, then we went in our school bus with a tipi on the roof to Zion National Park in Utah. We saw my folks in the Bay Area and went on to Garrick's place in Oregon. I worked thinning trees for a few days and quit because it was insane, mismanaged and not as rightful. They were cutting all the hard wood - just dropping it out complete.

Feather and I worked at a Christmas tree farm. We lived at Garrick's farm and built a barn there. That farm is out of sight. We harvested Garrick's garden. The only things we ever bought in town was margarine, salt, matches and cooking oil. The beauty of that was everything else, we grew it or gleaned it.

Thanksgiving Day, 1977, we went to occupy the Trojan nuclear power plant with Garrick and 300 people. Feather and I didn't get arrested. We stayed behind and our bus was the kitchen for the occupiers. We fed the people for free, and it was a joy to do so. Even the network news cameramen came over and ate with us. Grasshopper watched us on TV at my friend Dennis's house. Garrick's Rainbow Farm became an affinity group in the Trojan Decommissioning Alliance among many affinity groups. Garrick got arrested. There were 123 people arrested for peacefully occupying - i.e., trespassing. How to convey the beauty of complete and total understanding of 123 people thrown into such an intense

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situation? The whole experience for me was such a learning experience - just heartening to see the movement as it's evolved in the Northwest. The Trojan plant was actually closed down. We fucking closed it down!

The rain got to us up there. My wound from Nam in the right shoulder started to pain me in that moisture up there. So we headed back to New Mexico at the beginning of December, 1972. We got back before Christmas. It was snowing. We were broke and it was good to be home, even if we were only living in our bus parked in a friend's driveway. After Christmas our friend Betty invited us to park our bus next to her cabin and when she moved on, we took her cabin over. I thinned in January - pushing a chain saw for ten days - and got like \$500. I couldn't continue doing that, because my shoulder was still bothering me.

The biggest problem with thinning conflicts is inflation. Private business contracts always insert a provision for inflation, and the government in any of its contracts never allows such a sensible measure. And they just didn't have tax rules that fit our thingies up.

I'm into doing a job that needs to be done, but I ain't into this discipline trip. The discipline should come from the needs of the job. Things I've liked to do with my life, things that inspired me are nine times out of ten wageless. As my morality broadens - I use the word morality gently - I find the things I can do for money to be fewer and fewer. Like logging - I believe in harvesting trees, but I don't like the way it's done.

I realized that the forest thinned itself naturally, and running around with a saw eight or ten hours a day wasn't much help ecologically. When the snow breaks down the little trees in winter - that's Nature thinning the forest. And there's no gasoline for chain saws, no government contracts. I was just expediting a natural process and I got tired of expediting.

I started going to VA thinking about school, thinking this shoulder is starting to bother me and I can't do the things I've done. They shot me full of X-rays a number of times, spit me out and said, "Sorry, kid."

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It's probably karma for all the trees I ever cut - no gross, horrendous bummer. But I burnt that bridge behind me by not counter-suing, which is standard procedure. I didn't know that. I'm used to doing things straight out with no bullshit. The government sucks. I will never deal with the government again. If there's an amendment, I'll vote against it. I think we've legislated ourselves out of our rights.

We got pregnant again that spring. I accepted us becoming pregnant at first, even though we didn't plan it. I didn't say anything to Feather about it at all but, "Far out." And it got to be an ordeal after four months. Feather got dehydrated from extreme morning sickness to the point where she was white and could hardly walk. She was having to live at the end of an intravenous needle.

Do I feel responsible for pushing Feather into having an abortion, which she didn't want to do? Three medical doctors had advised Feather to have an abortion because of the severe problems she was having with the pregnancy - very probable brain damage to the baby. I don't believe in abortion as a form of birth control, but it may be what has to happen to the spirit in a case like this. I got a vasectomy because I wanted to share with my mate the responsibility of birth control - also for the love of the planet. I don't want to create any more drain on the planet than our two fine, enlightened children will be.

I started carpentry. A guy asked me to build a large mechanic shop for him in March, 1978. It was like 30 by 40, real high class. So when I finished building that, I was employed as a mechanic in the shop I had built, repairing cat tractors for logging for \$3.50 an hour. ^{Mechanics is my forte, but it's an intuitive thing.} I brought my sister to the Oregon Gathering in June, 1978. She was 25. She's had an extremely rough life. She's been in and out of institutions since 1966. She's been stabilizing since 1972. The gathering helped my sister immensely in a subtle way. She got really set straight. She had looked up to me too much. She realized the only imagery she needed to look up to was her own.

It was really heartening to see many of the different families and

tribes communicating and beginning to acknowledge and trust each other at the Oregon Gathering. A lot of them were beginning to get over their group insecurity. I was invited to Love Israel's Council of Chiefs of Tribes, but I didn't go. Love Israel invited certain people and I saw his love family turn away other people they didn't want. I met Love Israel after that. I found he was a beautiful, strong brother. But he was a benevolent dictator like Patterson of the Christ Brotherhood.

Leaving a gathering is like coitus interruptus. We're getting it on and just before we really get it together, it's time to go back to wherever. I felt this especially after the Oregon Gathering. At the New Mexico Gathering, we could go to the Velarde camp and be slowly let down. In Oregon we just had to leave and get back suddenly.

I really do feel politically motivated. I got in touch with my political heritage from my grand father who was a wobbly. What's killing the whole world is this Christian thing of "Out there some day" and never here and now. Everybody says "Politics ain't the way, it sucks, it's corruption." Well, I didn't say that. I don't believe it has to be that bad. I believe in consensus politics. That's how the gatherings function. It has to be decentralized, localized, grass roots.

We made up a big poster we sent out with mailings to our friends and contacts all over Arizona and New Mexico about the rally in Carlsbad, New Mexico, October 8 [1978] against storing nuclear wastes near the caverns. My friend Greg and I wrote the poster. We got 13 people from here with our big bus to go to Eden Hot Springs with food for the rally. Someone told me, "My God, you're an activist." I said, "You damn right." It's the first time I was ever called one or admitted it.

It was a joy to do. That's what we're trying to do - instill joy in people. People have got to learn to come together in a mutual

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cause. That's why I love the anti-nuclear movement so much, because it brings together all the different factions - scientists, hippies, mothers, irate taxpayers. It's a public relations war - if people see us healthy and happy with our families, then they'll come around our way.

In October of '78, the Republican hot shot candidate for Bob Atwood's position of Catron county clerk, Zeno Kiehn, him and the Republican county chairman where we live, went to district court in Socorro.

A Republican judge there had just thrown out Bob Atwood's counter-suit for defamation of character, making all the unproven half-truth testimony against Bob legally public. Zeno and the county chairman selected all the most damaging looking evidence - all of it unproven. One page about me and Feather said we received \$14,900 income and getting food stamps by Bob Atwood declaring zero income for us. This was circulated around the county.

We were used because we were prominent hippies in the county. Truth was we were up there in '76 running chain saws ten hours a day, busting our asses, and for a few months we did have zero income. We just took food stamps when our whole family and crew were out of money. For all this we missed the Montana Gathering. So I campaigned for Atwood in '78 wherever there was a receptive vibration amongst my friends.

The Republican thing represents the exploration and opening up of uranium in Catron County - 2,500 sites near Quemados. Bob Atwood pulled me to one side and told me the whole number. Which ranches had uranium and which ones didn't - which ones would sell out probably and which ones wouldn't. He knows these people.

We got something in this county that's unique. We still have a chance to save this corner from mining for uranium. I can't ignore it. I can't run away from it. Remember Gandhi's statement that in a choice between slavery and violence, prefer violence. People, wherever you are, get off your fucking ass and get involved. Don't let them sneak one over on us and take our land and our water.

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I feel the need to step back for a while - which we've been doing lately. I think Feather and I both feel responsible for something that we've been a part of, yet we have feelings of needing to step back for a while. My attitude now is really not that inspired. It's burnt out, frustrated, because of the lack of outlets for our creativity. Every time I go do something, it's like the taxes are too high to buy the land. I'm becoming more of a realist. Can we get it up to do it some more?

I know for a fact that the Rambow Family has come to be tremendously respected by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. One brother who works with mentally disturbed children at Ann Arbor, Michigan, he comes to the gatherings and has learned from them the importance of peer group pressure as a positive teaching instrument, and it's having an effect on the care of mentally ill. The government sees we have answers to a lot of their questions. They let us have our thing in the parks so they can watch. There's no other group that can have 8,000 to 20,000 people in the wilderness and not destroy the area or spend hundreds of thousands on cleanup. They're trying to find out how we do it. The Director of the Park Service has said that the Sierra Club and the Boy Scouts leave more garbage than we do. We don't even leave garbage in the cans. If anyone rips off from stores around the gathering, we pay it back. No one else covers their act that well.

They're funding programs like the YCC - Youth Conservation Corps and YACC - Young Adult Conservation Corps and VIP - Volunteers In the Park - connected with the Forest Service. These programs are not just to give jobs, but to restore the moral and social fabric of the next generation. These programs are directly as a result of what they've found from the Rambow Family. They see that it's good for kids to get in the woods and work with their hands. Yet I know that the government's still funding

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the neutron bomb. They will never permit within the scope of their program's certain liberties that we live by. We do a function no other group can fill.

I believe in the Peace Village concept. We feel as the respect grows, we are going to create an environmental land trust where we can do environmental repair work and exemplify a more natural life style in a dignified, healthy way. We can get New Age materials from the private sector. They want favorable publicity and tax write-offs. The government is already showing its respect for our ability to help people achieve self-worth and self-determination. The Peace Camps could be an example, a place where we could be allowed to live our ideals. And that's why the sheriff keeps coming back to the Peace Camp at Clifton, Arizona, and bringing bear steaks and blankets and his daughters.

However it goes down-or up-I don't care as long as we go on trying. One of the strongest things on this planet is our communion with each other. That's what the gatherings are about.

[The Reagan administration does not seem impressed with the Peace Village concept as the Carter Administration apparently was when I first interviewed Jay Sun. The YACC, YCC and VIP programs have had their funding drastically cut or been abolished.]

What follows is from later interviews I did with Jay Sun. He told how he gained some insights into society from a job as a counsellor in a reform school, insights that troubled him very much. The time demands of the job plus the tremendous pressure of the 1979 Arizona Peace Gathering contributed to the strain on his marriage.]

JAY SUN

I started working at the Alpine Correction Center - ACC - in early December, 1978. It had been like Siberia of the Arizona reform

school system originally 8000 feet above sea level, 37 below zero in the winter. I had heard about employment possibilities there when the old hard-assed program was running and I never went there to look for a job then. What finally happened was, there was an escape attempt. Five kids broke out. Three were caught. The other two broke into a camper and killed a guy and left another guy out in the middle of nowhere and stole the camper.

The place was understaffed - very poorly staffed. That little event brought so much heat on the place they did an investigation and dismissed the director and all his top people and brought charges of child abuse and siphoning off of funds. They started a whole new program there and that's when I hired on. They kept a few of the old hands and hired a whole bunch of new people. They hired a New Age director - a Ph D in child psychology. He didn't have to shout at me. He knew I knew.

I applied for a job in maintenance and I was there a week and a half before I was a counsellor, down there with the troops all the time, a sergeant. It was heavy. That's where I started smoking. Out of 70 kids and 30 staff, I was the only one that didn't smoke at first. I don't blame Feather for being upset about me starting smoking again.

I demanded that I be respected, but I couldn't be too dishonest. I couldn't maintain the front. Here I am, a long-haired hippie and I couldn't say, "I don't smoke pot." So I didn't talk about it. The staff didn't ask much about it, and when the kids jived me about it, I just give them a silent grin.

I had a pretty special rapport with the kids at that camp, unusual from anybody else's position. Like a kid admitted a murder to me. He was totally clean of it. They never caught him. They never knew and here I was a correctional agent and he told me about it. He trusted me. I don't know how much was trust and how much was having to get it off of his chest.

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regardless of what happened. From that point, I started working closer with that particular guy and he made remarkable improvements in his trip in the next few months.

The kids would come from being in the normal reform school program. These guys would be screened and boarded to see if they could go with this advanced, groovy program. They were being taken out of a lock-up situation and put into an outdoor situation. I would take them snow skiing and ice fishing. I took 20 of them on a picnic once - fuck, it was great.

It was 50% whites, 50% minorities, a larger proportion of whites than the general Arizona reform school system which is more like 30% whites, 70% non-whites. On the white side, we sometimes got the poor white kid who never had a break, had sniffed so much glue that he don't know what's going on. But on the other hand, we got some of the Anglo jet set star kids, spoiled rotten. They're smart. They just dance through it. They know how to play the game. I had them game down, because if I'd had a little more trouble, I might have been where they were. Like the first drunk I ever threw - I was 15. I chugged a magnum of wine with one breath. I went fucking out of my mind. I ran stark naked around this middle class neighborhood. These kids came from closer to the inner city than I did and I had more space to run out my trip and my parents were a little looser with me.

I had a deeper understanding of the white punks - but not a deeper relationship. The Chicano kids - I didn't understand where they were coming from at all - except as people. I wanted to be as respectful and giving and helpful as possible and I learned a lot. I got really close to a lot of these young brothers.

The biggest test I had to work with was a black kid. This kid was six foot two, as big as me, and mad. He very strongly resented me being young, white and hip and he knew that I smoked pot and he resented the fuck out of me being in a position of authority over him. In that case I was really called to stand up with the full power I had -

nose to nose, eye to eye, right to the edge of a fight. It was personal as well as institutional. We went through it and he saw that he couldn't bust me. I even helped him out a few times. He got real with the program after a while.

In April, 1979 we had the Easter Council about the Arizona Gathering. I was supposed to go to work, but I didn't even go. The reform school supervisor came to the council later, which was 15 miles away from the institution. He sat next to me in the most outrageous circle of hippies. During that circle there were times when Garrick would speak or Barry or someone else - clear, beautiful orations, just as one brother was giving this rap that he was of Christ and he could take anything in the world he wanted, the supervisor started to stand up and I had to put my hand on his shoulder to hold him back. I explained in a whisper that our process demanded respect of each person who was speaking and that we were working with a much broader view of counselling as opposed to caseworker versus client. I think the supervisor came to understand and respect our process in the next few months.

I left that job with some regret. I knew I couldn't continue working in Alpine with the gathering going on. The reform school staff were all very excited about the gathering. I brought photographs of past gatherings to show to the kids. The supervisor offered me a two-week leave of absence with pay, and I told him that I wanted to be home and I needed a month for the gathering and I couldn't do it in two weeks, our involvement in the gathering being what it was. We were the main focal people for the gathering.

I resigned. I wrote a very heartfelt letter of resignation, addressed not only to the supervisor but also to the chief of corrections, in which I spoke of the gatherings - that they were a more effective way of dealing with the problems in society that were causing these kids' problems. They hired me